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**See Decatur in a Whole New Light**

Economic Development Corporation of Decatur and Macon County

**VIA FAX**

May 2, 2011

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The Honorable Daniel R. Elliot, III  
Chairman  
Surface Transportation Board  
395 E Street, SW  
Suite 1220  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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EP705

Dear Chairman Elliot:

As a follow up to my previous letter dated March 30, 2011, I wanted to add additional information for consideration by the members of the Surface Transportation Board as you evaluate the future of America's railroads.

While a successful and vibrant rail industry is necessary, it is critically important that the well-being of our local shippers is also taken into consideration. We understand that may be a difficult balancing act, but many local companies who employ thousands of local residents require strong and viable freight rail systems in order to thrive.

Their ability to expand, prosper and remain viable depends on being able to negotiate the lowest transportation rates as well as increased flexibility to manage product shipments and access to raw materials in a global economic environment. Currently many railroads refuse to work with clients/employers to facilitate cost effective transfers between rail companies. Others will do so reluctantly but with huge transfer fees tacked on, eliminating any savings a company may realize by using another carrier.

These actions, at best, discourage competition and needlessly keep transportation costs for many of our employers at artificially inflated rates. You can imagine the worst case impacts of these anti-shipper practices.

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As you move the dialogue forward to improve the nation's railroads, I trust you will consider the rights of the shippers as well. As you know, without shippers generating products for cost effective global distribution, railroads won't matter anyway.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional input.

Regards,

  
J. Craig Coil  
President